ANS Correspondence

Gunther Collection

[Gunther, Charles Frederick]

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also, see T. E. Leon

1920

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SHOE OF SHERIDAN'S HORSE SOLD FOR $8

Works of Art Bring as Low as $5 at Same Sale in Chicago.

(By the Associated Press.)

CHICAGO, Oct. 8.—A shoe worn by the horse of General Phil Sheridan brought $8 when part of the collection of relics gathered by the late Charles F. Gunther was sold at auction here to-day.

More than 200 paintings were sold. A portrait of Major Andre, painted in 1780 by Sir Thomas Lawrence was sold to the American Art Gallery of New York for $4,750. The "betrayal of Nathan Hale," by J. B. White, brought $4,000.

Small portraits in oil of Daniel Webster, Lafayette and other personages of history brought only $5 to $10. A portrait of Prince Bismarck sold for $12. A portrait of Benjamin Franklin, by Gilbert Stuart brought $190. Artists attending the sale called it a "slaughter."

CHAS. FREDERICK GUNTHER.

Special to THE SUN AND NEW YORK HERALD.

CHICAGO, Feb. 10.—Charles Frederick Gunther, former Alderman and City Treasurer and builder of one of the largest candy factories in the West, died to-day of pneumonia. He was a collector of historical art, especially civil and Revolutionary War paintings and relics. Born in Wildberg, Germany, he came to this country with his parents when five years old. His first work was carrying mail over the mountains of Pennsylvania

Historical Society May Secure Famous Gunther Collection

The C. F. Gunther collection of historical manuscripts, documents, relics, letters, and possessions of great Americans, may be secured by the Chicago Historical society, it is said, for $150,000.

The collection has been declared priceless by some antiquarians and collectors. A number have estimated its worth at $1,000,000. The directors of the society are impatient to buy the precious lot and have no doubt that the money will be obtained.

"It will be nothing less than a calamity, which would be our reproach for all time, if we, as citizens of Chicago, do not exert every effort to purchase the Gunther collection for the society," Dr. Frank W. Gunsaulus says.

"A value of $300,000 is fixed upon only that part of the collection that has been seen and examined by experts," said Miss Caroline McIlvaine, librarian. "We will be able to raise the $150,000. We can sell a small part of the total collection for that sum, and thus safeguard the persons who guarantee the sum to the Gunther estate."

In the collection are an autograph of John Huss, born 1369 and burned as a heretic in 1414; a letter from the Chevalier Bayard to Louis XII., dated May 12, 1509; autograph letters of Martin Luther and Galileo, and the first newspaper, the Oxford Gazette, November, 1665.

There are documents signed by William Penn and George Washington, including Washington's will; the pass given Maj. Andre by Benedict Arnold; Lincoln's original dispatch to Grant, April 7, 1865: "Gen. Sheridan says, 'If the thing is pressed I think Lee will surrender.' Let the thing be pressed," and many other interesting things.

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The Chicago Historical Society has purchased the entire collection of the late Charles F. Gunther for $150,000. This amount was raised by a dozen public-spirited citizens of Chicago. I hear they are likely to treat the collection as Harvard University did that of Evert Jansen Wendell, that they will select what is of interest to them and sell the rest at auction,

The collection fs exceedingly rich in fine autographs and historical documents, and has also a vast amount of other historical material.

GEORGE HENRY THOMAS.

George Henry Thomas was born in Southampton County, Virginia, on July 31, 1816. He died in San Francisco on March 28, 1870.

He entered the United States Military Academy at the age of 20, was graduated twelfth in his class and commissioned 2d lieutenant in the 3rd artillery on July 1, 1840, stationed at New York, but soon sent to Flotida where in 1841 he was brevetted for gallantry in the Indian War. He was sent to Texas in the autumn of 1841, and served in the Mexican War under Zachary Taylor, was breveted for bravery at Monterey, and again breveted for gallantry at Buena Vista in February, 1849, and from 1851 to 1854 was instructor at West Point. On May 12, 1855 brevet Major Thomas was appointed junior major of a new regiment of cavalry and was stationed in Texas from 1855 to 1861. While absent on a furlough in 1860 his regiment was treacherously surrendered in Texas, and he was ordered to take charge of it on its arrival in New York and conduct it to barracks iu Carlisle, Penna., and from that time to the end of the war, he devoted himself without rest to the calls of his country.

He was appointed Brigadier General of Volunteers on August 17, 1861 for his services at Bull Run, and assigned to duty in the Army of the Cumberland, and shared in all the operations that culminated in the battle of Shiloh and the driving of the Confederate Armies from the reigon between the Cumberland Mountains and the Mississippi. He was made Major-General on April 25, 1862, and participated in all his department movements which ended in the decisive and bloody battle of Chickamauga, after which on October 19, 1863, he was placed in command of the Army of the Cumberland, which was still in a state of siege by the enemy at Chattanooga, and witn the aid of reenforcements from the Potomac and Mississippi, the Confederate forces were driven from Mission Ridge and Lookout Mountain, and on the 25th of November, his army was freed from its long imprisonment.

General Thomas and his forces also participated in the Atlanta campaign in Spring of 1864, being almost continuously engaged for one hundred days in battle with a loss of killed and wounded of 32 per cent of his army, ending in the battle of Nashville, where he overthrew the last organized Confederate Army in the Southwest. In May 1869, General Thomas was placed in command of the military division of the Pacific, which he held until his death.

The autograph collection of J. H. Benton of Boston, was sold by the American Art Association in New York on March 12th and 13th. It contained many fine items, especially in presidents of U. S., but much of it was poor material and over catalogued. When will the auction house learn the English rule, to bunch cheap stuff, and not waste time and money on it?

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GEORGE D. SMITH, bookseller, died last month suddenly. He was the leading book auction buyer of the world. Starting from nothing, no family, no money, and little education, he became the greatest bookbuyer in the world. He did not pretend to know much about the inside of his books. He said: "I don't read books, I sell them".

He introduced the methods of the race track gambler and plunger into the book trade, and by the aid of some wealthy backers, made a success of it. When he wanted an item, whether a million dollar library, or a twenty-five cent signature, he bid for it until he had overcome all opposition, and the price did not seem to matter. He paid prices which would have wrecked ordinary large dealers, and he thrived on it. In his career he had some heavy falls at first, but plunged on and at the last was on top.

He was the Napoleon of the book trade and has left no successor.

PRICE LIST

Many people think the letters and documents listed here are facsimiles or copies of originals. I guarantee them to be in every case the originals as they came from the hands of the writers.

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